

Indiana's Music Soul

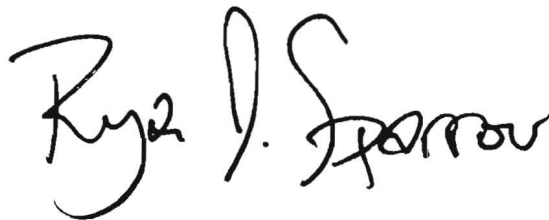
An Honors Thesis (HONR 499)

by

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A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ryan J. Sparrow". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Ryan" and last name "Sparrow" being more prominent than the middle initial "J.".

**Ball State University
Muncie, Indiana**

May 2013

Expected Date of Graduation

May 2013

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Abstract

Indiana musicians are united by a sense of pride for not only their art, but the state in which they are from. Although cities like New York and Austin and L.A. often get the majority of music attention, Indiana as a state is doing something special on a micro-level, keeping ears engaged with quality expression. While many of these artists and music minds may not be recognized outside of the Hoosier state, music enthusiasts within Indiana boundaries will speak highly of the music that this state has to offer. Even within the community of Indiana rock 'n' roll, a vast variety of sounds can be heard, from wild and crazy surf-punk to hazy psychedelic rock. Through and through, Indiana's music community as a whole is alive and well, representing the state through their genuine musical expression.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my advisor, Professor Ryan Sparrow, for guiding me through this process and pushing me to be a compelling writer.

I would also like to thank all the music minds that I spoke with for their hospitality. Finally, I would like to thank my friends for encouraging me through their excitement for my final product.

Many cities across the country have a genre of music attached to them. From Memphis and its blues background to Seattle and its thriving underground scene to New Orleans and its jazz history. Indiana is a soul state, but not in the conventional genre-driven meaning of the word. From the stage-diving punk rockers to the folk singers sitting on street corners, there are a variety of artists expressing themselves through a diverse mix of music running across the state. Amongst Indiana artists, there is a collective soul, championing for the state's presence amongst the music world.

While so many parts of the globe have their definitive musical sound, this isn't the case for Indiana. Although there are more rock bands than there are jazz musicians, the state as a whole is not defined by one genre. Instead the common thread seems to be a pride in state and heritage and a desire to an oft looked over state. Throughout my process of conducting interviews, artists continually spoke to me about making a name for the state and how

much growing up in this state affected their expression. Many spoke to the fact that they could easily have moved elsewhere, but instead, they were content with where they are now, exuding genuine vibrations of their own in the place they call home. With the majority of the musicians I interviewed, music was their part-time job in a sense, as they often had to work a day job to help support their daily living expenses. In this sense, I also believe Indiana musicians hold true to the state's hardworking reputation.

Indiana's music scene today is spread out, but Bloomington and Indianapolis are hotspots because they are accepting communities that allow creative minds to bloom. This goes for the majority of the artists profiled in this paper. Despite the state's landlocked stature, this unique musical expressionism has been happening in the state for a long while now as my article on Indiana new wave in the '80s will illustrate. One only has to see how popular Fountain Square is becoming to know that local music is thriving. As my profiles point out, excitement still runs rampant throughout the state. There seems to be no sign of Indiana's music output slowing down any time soon.

These profiles portray this state's love for music- this state's musical soul. Rather than simply analyzing the dominant rock 'n' roll culture, I also dove into some other genres, in hopes of finding similar passion. Ore Jones, an Indianapolis hip-hop artists who has been on the rise of late, spoke to this drive that I picked up on in all of my interviews. "You hold on to this objective idea as an artist that you could possibly make your mark in Indiana history as an artist," he said. "Some people always say, 'Oh, why aren't you in Chicago? Why aren't you in New York? Why aren't you in L.A?'" I'm not gonna lie, I've thought about that a whole bunch of times before, but it's cool to think that maybe, possibly, you could make a mark in the history of hip-hop, or just music in general, being under the whole Indiana mind state."

25-YEAR-OLD KIDS

BY: SETH JOHNSON

In a scene of up-and-coming Bloomington artists, Mike Adams has chosen to remain age blind, living vicariously through his music to maintain a teenage mindset.

Adams, lead singer/guitarist of husband&wife, is now married and recently had his first child. Nevertheless, he still tries to keep himself trapped inside a kid's frame of mind.

"My dad told me recently that even though he's in his mid-50's, he still very much feels, internally, like a teenager and I can definitely relate to that," Adams said. "I'm not sure if it's more of a case of arrested development, or 'you're only as old as you feel,' but I tend to be a little age-blind, especially around Bloomington, and especially among my friends."

In a similar light, Tim Felton (guitarist/vocals) admits the band quit playing house shows because of the age of the audience; however, husband&wife still continued to book shows in the Bloomington area because of the youthful sensations they got from playing. Considering all of this, Felton said the band's age didn't play a part in their retirement.

"I think husband&wife likes that it makes us feel energized," Felton said. "It was not because we felt old, just because people's heads seemed like they were in different places."

Growing out of a band that Adams and Felton started together in college, husband&wife personify the state of Indiana, admitting its importance to them.

"Indiana just means home to us," Adams said. "We're all from here, born and raised, and with the exception of a few months abroad here-and-there, we've lived here our whole lives. Everything we know about being in a band and being connected to a music scene or however you want to say that comes from this place. We don't know anything else."

The band will be retiring on April 20, 2013, leaving behind an expansive 10-year career. Nevertheless, husband&wife's legacy goes beyond their many studio releases.

"A lot of my favorite memories with husband&wife have to do with hanging out and working with the other dudes, rather than milestones that the band had reached," Adams said. "It's much harder, and more rewarding, to maintain a close relationship with someone than it is to write a song. I feel we've been successful at both."

Having only released a 7" in the time since their 2010 album, "Proud Flesh," the band feels that they have gotten away from the precedent they set of releasing albums on a more consistent timetable. According to Felton,

husband&wife felt they should just call it quits, rather than lowering the bar.

Having seen the band evolve over the years, Adams believes husband&wife always had a firm grasp on the “utility side” of being a band, including touring and recording. In his opinion, the band evolved more in “know-how and artistic approach.”

After years of playing music, Adams believes the band became their own in the latter part of their career, straying away from trying to sound like the artists they were inspired by.

“I think our earlier output kind of has our influences on its sleeves,” he said. “Later on, I think we started to sound more like ‘husband&wife.’

With the release of their 7”, the band made a conscious effort to work collaboratively. According to Felton, the band has almost an album’s worth of material that was not released because it did not fulfill the collaborative standards husband&wife had established.

But with several members of the band also working with other projects, Felton believes this was an appropriate time to quit.

“I wish we could’ve done a full-length but we just didn’t have enough gas in the tank,” he said. “It was going to turn into a struggle to make the full-length so we didn’t.”

For Adams, this band has been even more than a hobby. According to him, it truly has made him into the man that he is today.

“Whatever and whoever I am right now is the product of 10 years of being in husband&wife and doing all of the things that husband&wife has done,” he said. “I’m feeling pretty good about my life at the moment, so I’d say that’s a good thing.”

ROCK N ROLL KNIGHTS

BY: SETH JOHNSON

Having fun is just what No Coast does.

With a great deal of local music know-how, No Coast was started when two past members (Nate Black and Mike Wilson) of Indiana hardcore mainstay, In the Face of War, joined forces with fellow Kokomo musician Bryon White. The band has since added Neal Cunningham on organ.

After being involved with the hardcore scene for many years, the members of No Coast united to form a band that was free from the seriousness of hardcore music.

“We were sick of people taking their bands too seriously,” said White, drummer for No Coast. “We just wanted to start a band where it’s fun punk rock that everybody can get down to.”

In a 2012 concert review of the band’s live show, Scott Raycel of Indianapolis weekly publication NUVO Magazine wrote, “No Coast delivered a mix of surf, punk, and rock and roll that had many jumping around. No Coast is very different from any project that the members have previously been in, and the fact that these musicians have been in the scene for so long only compliments their songwriting.”

Transitioning from hardcore punk to surf punk came naturally for No Coast, with all of the members being longtime fans of punk legends such as The Ramones and The Clash.

White admits his favorite part of being in the band has truly been the camaraderie he’s had with his fellow Kokomo companions.

“[My favorite part of the band is] just that I get to hang out with my friends that are also my band mates and play cool places,” he said. “That we’re actually getting a good response from people I think is really cool.”

With all four of the band members working at the same Kokomo speaker shop (Weber Speakers), orchestrating concert dates can sometimes be difficult. Nevertheless, the band continually plays shows around the state, including Indianapolis and Muncie.

Muncie garage rock band Wine Teeth have played many Muncie shows with No Coast over the past year. Ryan Rader, Wine Teeth vocalist, remembers becoming a fan of the band after he first heard their cassette tape demo from May 2012.

“I found a copy of their demo tape laying around the bar [Be Here Now in Muncie] after they played a show and took it home and gave it a name and learned to love it,” Rader said.

Carrying a similar “have fun” mantra with Wine Teeth, Rader’s band and No Coast get along quite well.

"I'm not a very good swimmer, so when it comes to coasts, I prefer none," he said. "I also think they wear appropriate clothes and are nice boys."

Despite their laid back persona, No Coast still has serious goals, including a summer tour. White admits he is consistently impressed with how the band meets its goals with great success.

"It seems like every time I try to think of something, we're already on our way to achieving that," he said.

The band recently released its first full-length album on April 20 of this year, coinciding with this year's Record Store Day. Titled "Rock N Roll Night (Yeah Right)", the release of this full-length marks another goal accomplishment in White's eyes.

Proving their knowledge of the recording side of music as well, the band has been recording the full-length on its own, using reel-to-reel audio tape recording. (When I spoke with White, he informed me that the album was almost finished as of early February.)

Until that release, the band will continue playing energy-packed, ear-shattering shows to fans that just want to have fun too.

"We play Muncie because every time we play it's fun," White said, using the city as an example of what the band looks for in a show. "We don't want to play shows that aren't fun. People that come out are awesome and they give us a good response. It's all about the energy and we get good energy from people in Muncie."

CHAMPIONING FOR THE STATE

BY: SETH JOHNSON

Sean Smith's high school punk band was named Screaming Hemorrhoids. But now the man, known to Indiana music fans as Oreo Jones, finds himself as one of the most acclaimed hip-hop artists in the state.

But Oreo admits it has never been easy.

Voted NUVO Magazine's #1 local hip-hop artist of 2012, Oreo Jones was honored to receive some recognition for all of his hard work.

"It was gratifying that you do this work and then people recognize you, not only as an artist, but a person," he said. "That's really important to me- to be able to connect with people on a personal level and not having to trump other values."

Although he has reached the level of respect that he now has, Oreo remembers how difficult it was to book his first show and gain respect from the local arts community.

"Some people think that I just eat pizza and fucking do a couple things, and bam, I'm like this," he said.

"People probably perceive me as chillin', but this is a lot of hard work, a lot of sweat and some ups and downs and shit."

Ben Jackson [also known as Action Jackson] is the co-founder of Rad Summer, a local Indianapolis label of which Oreo Jones is apart. Jackson also works with Oreo on live shows and his Black Fabio projects

Oreo and Jackson have grown close over the years, with Oreo referring to Jackson as a brother. For Jackson and his label, Oreo's fun-natured feel fits perfectly into Rad Summer's overall purpose.

"Our aesthetic is basically fun forward thinking music," Jackson said. "We put out a lot of dance/heavy bass EPs, but we don't want to be pigeonholed as just another EDM label so that's where more of our acts like Oreo Jones, Dorsh, Party Lines, and Andy D come in to play- all are very different at first glance but all have that common thread of originality, fun, and experimentation."

Jackson attributes many factors to Oreo's success.

"First and foremost he can rap- he's a very strong and clever writer that can weave humor into hip-hop which is very difficult to do without coming off corny or as a novelty act," he said. "Second, he's just an interesting cat, who isn't afraid to be himself, which also shows through in the music. Lastly, he has a great voice as well."

Oreo initially struggled to find his own unique style. For him, a key to being a compelling hip-hop artist is remaining genuine and throwing trends to the curb.

"It's more important to focus on being the best you can possibly be, and doing it in a way where it's not compromising you as a person," Oreo reflects. "Like, fuck what everyone else is doing, you're trying to blaze your own path."

He admits he is constantly writing concepts, constantly thinking of "stories or an idea or a feeling." And that's not all Oreo has been writing down.

He has also been exploring several other modes of expression, including, writing poetry and short stories, shooting photos, and working on a book and a few zines. Oreo admits he loves hip-hop, but he knows expressing himself in other ways will help him grow as an artist.

"I'm also trying to do other things that challenge myself that keep me thinking and keep my mind open- trying to be uncomfortable doing other things," Oreo said. "That's important to me, being uncomfortable."

Oreo's debut album, titled "Betty," was released in 2012. The release is named after his grandmother Betty, who passed away in June 2011, and filled the roles of "grandma, mom, dad and good friend," according to an Indianapolis Star article from 2012.

Oreo feels "blessed" to have received the support he has from his family, which also includes extended family and anyone who he has been "touched" by.

"I've fucked up and I've done some stupid shit, but I'm not out here working a 9 to 5. I'm literally working a part-time job and a full-time artist," Oreo said. "It's good to have a support system of people that believe in you. I love all of my family very much."

In 2012, Oreo played the Musical Family Tree Showcase at Radio Radio in Indianapolis, a performance that stands out as special from his past.

Having performed many times, Oreo said "sometimes you have shows and it's just like, 'damn, you nailed it.'" The MFT showcase happened to be one of those for him.

"I just remember, at Musical Family Tree, everyone was just honed in," he said. "You play shows and everyone in the audience is not even having banter between songs. They're just locked in and there's tons of people and you control the whole fucking crowd, the whole room."

Oreo admits he finally felt accepted by the Indiana music scene when NUVO Magazine recognized him last year. Now that he has established a name for himself, he strives to "champion" for the state.

"You hold on to this objective idea as an artist that you could possibly make your mark in Indiana history as an artist," he said. "It's cool to think that maybe, possibly, you could make a mark in the history of hip-hop, or just music in general, being under the whole Indiana mind state."

RECORD LABEL SERIES PT. 1: XRA- CARRYING THE WEIGHT OF THE STATE

BY: SETH JOHNSON

I will be writing a collection of articles capturing the spirit of independent record labels in the state of Indiana, getting to the core of their passion and support for local music.

Taking pride in their music, the state of Indiana, and most importantly their friendships with one another, Crossroads of America (XRA) Records has become one of Indiana's most successful homegrown musical bodies.

When Mike Adams and Tim Felton, members of Bloomington's husband&wife, set out on the this daunting journey of sprouting a label, they were unsure where the label would end up.

In fact, the two used the label as a means of promoting husband&wife's second release, "Operation Surgery," in hopes of grabbing the attention of possible reviewers under the pretense that a label was releasing the album.

"We were trying to book some tour dates and get some press for the album, so we thought if we had this record label doing our business for us it might look more official and less like self-promotion," Adams remembers.

The Bloomington-based label has only grown since its initiation, producing several Indiana releases from bands such as Away With Vega, Rodeo Ruby Love, Sleeping Bag, and Wet Blankets.

But XRA Records goes far beyond its releases.

"I think Mike Adams and the bands he surrounded himself with created a real pride in themselves and for Indiana," said Zach Melton, lead singer of Rodeo Ruby Love, a band that was once apart of XRA. "I think we always liked where we came from. But Mike brought together a lot of musicians who kind of knew each other and made one collective group of proud Hoosiers."

Felton and Adams are both aware of the familial relationships they have with the bands on their label.

"The family feel comes from the people that we happen to be- people that love being around one another, love friends and family," Felton reflects. "[In Bloomington] you don't see your blood relatives as often, but you see a lot of your friends and they've kind of become family members."

Felton and Adams use the label as a means of shedding more light on their friends' creative works. And with every new release, the goal is to share quality music, rather than make a profit.

"The goal was never to make money. If it was, then we are greatly failing," Felton said. "We're doing it because we like the music and we're interested in the projects."

According to Melton, the 2012 Wet Blankets debut album, titled "Sheepy Love," is a prime example. Melton admits he has seen Wet Blankets' lead singer, Aaron Denton, grow from "the singer of a goofy emo band into one

of the most talented songwriters in Indiana right now.”

In the eyes of XRA, however, Denton is more than a gifted artist.

“He is a good friend, a roommate, an honest and good person. And an added bonus: a really good songwriter,” Melton said.

Although husband&wife will be no more after the month of April 2013, Adams still plans to continue playing music in other projects. For him, the collective body of musicians he has surrounded himself at XRA with truly drives him as an artist.

“XRA has definitely surrounded me with a super supportive network of fans and fellow artists that have simultaneously driven me to keep my head in the music game, and also encouraged me to do so,” Adams said. “I like it when people feel like they can count on me, and XRA has offered me that in a lot of ways.”

Melton and Rodeo Ruby Love have not been apart of the label since 2011. Nevertheless, he still sees the band’s time with XRA as impactful on his life.

“No longer being a member of the XRA team, I look back and think: there was a moment in my life where I was involved with a label and with other musicians that were putting out the best music in the state of Indiana,” he said. “I will never be a part of something that magical and that powerful again.”

All in all, Melton believes the label’s collective mentality can be summed up within it’s own name.

“Just the name Crossroads of America should carry some weight as far as core values. Indiana, the Midwest, the Rust Belt, all have a few things that run true: hard work and honesty,” he said. “I think XRA believes in being honest with themselves: they know that the music industry is not a lucrative business.”

RECORD LABEL SERIES PT. 2: JURASSIC POP- THE HATCHING OF SOMETHING GREAT

BY: SETH JOHNSON

I will be writing a collection of articles capturing the spirit of independent record labels in the state of Indiana, getting to the core of their passion and support for local music.

Jeff Mather's heart is forever linked to West Lafayette's music community.

Working a full-time job in Cleveland, Mather graduated from Purdue with an engineering degree in 2012. But more importantly, he legitimized West Lafayette's music community through his home and regular house venue, Jurassic Park.

Mather built Jurassic Park's high-standing reputation from the ground up, eventually drawing in internationally touring bands to play at his home including Reading Rainbow and Cloud Nothings.

More importantly, however, Mather helped generate excitement for local music in the town.

"What I tell people now is more than just having cool-ass bands play in your shitty basement, what's so great about it is the fact that more than just being a place to do shows, it started its own community," Mather said. "Every city has their little community. As small as it might be or as huge as it might be, there's still something. There really wasn't that sense of community in West Lafayette."

Mather put all he had into the venue's existence, ensuring the future growth of a music community in the town.

"Jurassic Park wasn't a financially good thing for me. I lost some money, but it was the cost of what was happening and I was okay with that," he said.

Dan Varnau plays in the band Dino DNA with Mather. Long time friends, Varnau also plays in Mid-American (meaning both of his bands are now on Mather's record label).

Having frequented Jurassic Park events, Varnau witnessed the impact the house venue had on West Lafayette.

"It was pretty much the hub of Lafayette music for a while," Varnau remembers. "I think that's sort of the reason why people started starting bands- so that they could play there."

After Mather's job led him elsewhere, he still wanted to have a hand in West Lafayette's music community. Along with his friend Dylan Schwab, he decided he would start a record label to showcase Indiana music, appropriately titled Jurassic Pop.

In hopes of keeping West Lafayette's music community vibes alive and well, Mather decided he was up for the challenge.

"We had all these bands in our friend group that we wanted to release and do stuff with," he said.

The label currently has a number of reissued albums on cassette from the likes of Mid-American, High School Girls, and several others, with many other new releases on vinyl and cassette in the works.

Taking responsibility for the marketing and promotional deeds of running the label, making a profit is not Mather's primary goal.

"Making money would be awesome, though that's not even a goal," Mather said. "This is actually something that I genuinely love doing. I got my full-time job in Cleveland, and this is like my hobby in a way."

Having been involved with Indiana's music scene for a long while now, Mather truly just wishes to legitimize West Lafayette's music presence in the state.

"When you think of Bloomington, you think of XRA and Flannelgraph. When you think of Indy, you think of Joyful Noise and GloryHole Records," he said. "In a way, one of my goals is to become that mainstay home record label of Lafayette."

As has always been the case with Mather's passion for music, however, a wholehearted approach truly makes this effort special, according to Varnau.

"It takes a lot to start your own record label," Varnau points out. "He's forking out a lot of money without knowing where that's going to go. He's been gung-ho about it the whole time."

RECORD LABEL SERIES PT. 3: MAGNETIC SOUTH- BACK TO THE BASICS

BY: SETH JOHNSON

I have been writing a collection of articles capturing the spirit of independent record labels in the state of Indiana, getting to the core of their passion and support for local music. This is the final installment of my series.

NOTE: The founders of the label requested this interview be done via email, so every response was a collaborative answer from Seth Mahern and John Dawson.

Q: Tell me about how Magnetic South got started.

A: Magnetic South was started in 2008 here in Bloomington, Indiana by Seth Mahern, John Dawson, and Aaron Deer. The three of us had been involved in various recording projects for years. Each of us had gathered a modest collection of old audio equipment. It was mostly low budget thrift store stuff. We decided to consolidate all into one Frankenstein junk studio. We were inspired by people like Lee Perry and Joe Meek who made really good, unique sounding recordings with limited resources and a willingness to explore sonic worlds beyond the best standards and practices of audio engineering.

Q: What are the primary goals of Magnetic South?

A: One of the goals of Magnetic South is to establish an expansive creative environment for musicians. We've seen a lot of shifts in the way records are made and digital audio technology has become more standardized. We've also seen the model of labels change a lot. Small labels have become less involved with providing resources for the production of recordings. As the paradigm of artist self-production has become standard, collaborative processes in the recording studio have started to turn into a lost art. This is all under the auspices of artistic autonomy and innovation, but often the results are not very artful or innovative. We wanted to have the freedom to explore group experimentation in a recording situation. There is a magic there that can't be approached by the self-contained, one-person iPad-and-blog musician.

Q: Who have been some of the more notable artists that Magnetic South has worked with and what makes them special?

A: John Terrill is certainly the most important artist we've worked with at Magnetic South. He is a great lyricist, and his knowledge of recorded music made after 1960 is absolutely mind boggling. He's been making wild and exciting sounds here in Bloomington for almost four decades. And after all of these years, he's still making essential music. Sometimes known as Mad Monk, John Terrill has been a huge influence, inspiration, and collaborator with almost every Magnetic South artist including Apache Dropout and Thee Open Sex. Without his support and expertise both of these bands would not be where they are now. We've also hosted some bands for live shows that were great: Puffy Areolas, Purling Hiss, Nudity, MMOSS, Lenguas Largas...

Q: Why did Magnetic South choose to go the cassette tape route?

A: We started this with the intention that the production of music would be the driving force of the project. We always considered the creation of a physical object to be the final presentation for the music we were making since that is the way we listen to music. Cassettes are a very affordable way for artists to release physical media. There is an illusion that cassettes are obsolete, but cassettes are possibly the most durable medium for audio ever created.

Q: When it comes to promoting cassette tape recordings, how do you promote cassettes in today's world of digital downloading? What are the pluses to cassette tape recordings?

A: Our primary concern has never been about marketing and promotion. That's one of the reasons that we were and are attracted to the cassette. The economy of the format is certainly paramount. We've released albums with as little as twenty copies. For us it's all about the artistic process. We're focused on creating music. We're not focused on creating demand.

Q: How does the label go about finding artists to record?

A: The label started as an outlet for our own projects and music by our nearby friends that we were excited about. Since we do a lot of the recording and artwork for our releases, we try and connect with people who are interest-

ed in collaborating with us.

Q: Describe the style of music that Magnetic South seeks out. I know gritty rock is what characterizes the label, but can you expand on that?

A: Bruce Lee said, "Because of style people are separated. They are not united together, because styles became law." We aren't aligned with a particular style or brand. This doesn't mean there isn't aesthetic continuity in what we do; it just means that we aren't restricted by a stylistic formula. That being said, our first release was Sitar Outreach Ministry 1, which couldn't be further from "gritty rock."

Q: What future plans does Magnetic South have?

A: We are going to make the best records we can. We've got quite a list of projects we're currently working on. This includes releases by Apache Dropout, Sitar Outreach Ministry, Thee Open Sex, The Nevermores, Psychic Baos, and Thee Tsunamis.

A TREE OF LIMITLESS BRANCHES

BY: SETH JOHNSON

When artistic minds throughout the state of Indiana look for a way to connect with the entire community of musicians branching throughout the Hoosier state, there's one place in particular they turn to.

MUSICAL FAMILY TREE.

In the midst of finishing his student teaching, Jon Rogers was asked by Jeff Banner, original founder of the Indiana music blog Musical Family Tree, to work more heavily with the site. Having already blogged for the site in the past, Rogers accepted the challenge.

"At the end of my student teaching I felt like I absolutely loved it [blogging]," Rogers said. "It was like, 'Wow I can actually do this for my job.' I proposed to him to let me run with the site for a while. He took me on at the beginning of last year."

Rogers says he is more or less the director of MFT at this point. His responsibilities are not solely limited to blogging. He also works on setting up concerts in the community and promoting local acts. Although the site has been a household name to most Indiana musicians for years, Rogers admits MFT recently solidified its Indiana allegiance.

"It's been around for a long time but we wanted to make it about getting Indiana music to the rest of the world and making sure that we can promote the stuff that we really like," he said.

According to Rogers, MFT's site is now home to over 1,000 bands, allowing them to showcase their work to the rest of the state and beyond. At its roots, MFT served as a social media site for musicians, with a message board for artists to network through. But as Facebook and other social media giants have come into reign on the web, the site has transformed into more of a blog.

When it comes to digging up bands to post on the site, Rogers said many bands simply learn of MFT through other musician friends. Nevertheless, some filtering does take place before a band is given blog space.

"As far as filtering bands, if there is no connection to the Indiana music scene we might be like, 'Sorry guys. We're only focusing on Indiana right now,'" he said. "Stylistically, it may not be a style of music that I'm into, but we have different criteria- if it's interesting, but it's not necessarily what I would listen to, or if it's at least creative or you can tell that the band is doing what they do well."

Mark McWhirter, who goes by the artist name of Dr. Ray, utilizes the site to its fullest capabilities, according to Rogers, with more than 75 albums posted on MFT. A 23-year-student at Indiana University, McWhirter records all of his music at home on a 4-track cassette player, allowing him to release music at a rapid pace.

"I think he just stays home and records music all the time- really far out, weird stuff," Rogers said. "In terms of how our site can serve a musician, I think he's a great example- somebody who really doesn't have any other presence online. He just uses our page as his website."

McWhirter pays much gratitude to Rogers and the opportunities MFT offers to him.

"Jon Rogers has been nice with promoting or doing a review," McWhirter said. "It's not like he's like, 'We're going to promote your album.' He just chooses to do that. It helps more people know about me."

Jeff Mather, co-founder of Jurassic Pop [West Lafayette record label], has reaped from MFT's benefits, both as a musician and a record label owner.

"A guy like Jon is so important to not just Indy, but the entire state because he brings everything together and gets excited about all different kinds of music. He gets a high out of it," Mather said. "MFT is such an incredible website and even having an archive of all the music and a blog and stuff is super good for the state."

For many artists, MFT has served as a springboard, shedding light on the artist and grabbing the attention of local publications and other "various promoters."

In terms of the site's future, Rogers has high hopes for more growth and continued recognition from the state.

"Essentially what we would like to do is continue to grow and have more writers, content creators, people working with us to promote local music culture. We'd love to see bands get paid more," he said. "We'd love to see a relationship established with the city and state governments to help get more funding for local music scenes throughout the state. I think some of that is a long way off and maybe not even possible, but those are the kinds of things we are interested in."

FOUNTAIN SQUARE RULES THE WORLD

BY: SETH JOHNSON

Debbie's Palace of Noise and Laundry is Mitchell Duncan's home.

Duncan lives in Fountain Square with two other roommates. His home is not only where he sleeps every night, but often the venue for local Fountain Square house shows. Perhaps the most notable of these house show events has been Cataracts Music Festivals, for which houses in the Fountain Square neighborhood host one full day of house shows, uniting local artists and drawing in some touring ones as well.

A member of the psychedelic rock band, Crys, who performed at last year's Cataracts, Duncan vividly remembers:

"I think we were at the peak of people coming out. There were probably 40 people standing on my roof and watching the band play in the yard. My fence got knocked down because there were so many people trying to get into the yard. There was in between 900-1000 people hanging out. Even through that day, everyone was happy. It's just the definition of what we've been trying to do in Fountain Square- bring everyone together."

Derek Johnson, an Assistant Professor of Music theory and Composition, has lived in Fountain Square for about a year and a half now. His recollection of the festival was similar in praise.

"That event was such a magical day," Johnson raves.

Johnson, who has worked with several internationally touring musicians and composers, admits that although he has so many extravagant opportunities outside of the Fountain Square community, he still finds an incredible amount of joy in collaborating with local musicians.

And although New York City is undoubtedly a hotspot for many aspiring musicians, Johnson is content where he is, at the moment.

"My trajectory was really pointed towards going to New York, but I've fallen in love with Fountain Square," he said. "I have things there [Fountain Square]- a studio a block away from my apartment, quality of life, and overall vibe of really being in a community that I couldn't have in New York."

HOUSE SHOW HEAVEN

Jon Rogers (known by most in the Indiana music community as Crafty, the vivacious frontman of the band

Everything, Now!) is currently in charge of the Indiana music blog, Musical Family Tree (MFT).

In an effort to unite local musicians, MFT is constantly posting music from local artists in an effort to create an online community for Indiana music.

Having been around Indiana's music scene for a while now, Rogers is aware of the importance of house shows to a music community such as Fountain Square.

"To me, house shows are everything," Rogers said. "...you can judge the health of any scene based on its house shows."

Debbie's Palace of Noise and Laundry is often host to house shows in Fountain Square, bringing in diverse acts from around the state and beyond.

While some may view these house shows in the same light as parties, they do undoubtedly differ.

For instance, when it comes to preparation, Duncan says the booking process begins months in advance; however, the house clean-up might resemble the general party foresight needed a college town with "general preparation to get someone's living quarters ready for random people to walk in" starting about a week before the show.

Johnson has attended several house shows in Fountain Square since he has been living in the neighborhood.

"It's a lot like a venue show where you have this incredible intimacy; you're really close to the music and everyone in the room," he reflects. "You could say it's like a really cool party because it's at a house so it has the vibe of a party."

And according to Duncan's description, this party "vibe" seems to ring true, even in a community far from any college campus.

"It's usually pretty hot inside of the houses because no one really pays for air conditioning and the amount of people inside," Duncan describes. "Usually in the backyard, there's a bunch of people hanging out, usually drinking beers maybe smoking stuff, just really looking to have a good time."

With Fountain Square's friendly neighborhood unity, Duncan describes house shows are also "pretty chill and easy-going" and without "negative vibes."

COMMUNITY VIBES

With several musicians and artists living within close quarters, Fountain Square can truly be described as a

creative neighborhood, with surrounding music venues and art centers further solidify this fact.

From the White Rabbit to Radio Radio to the Murphy Center for the Arts, the community of artists living in the Fountain Square area has begun to cultivate an art-centered community.

Stephen Zumbrum runs the Hoosier Dome, an all ages venue that recently moved to Fountain Square from Broad Ripple. Zumbrum heads up the Indianapolis music collective, Piradical Productions, which has booked hundreds of all ages shows over the years in the Indianapolis area.

Piradical Productions has had several homes, but currently resides in Fountain Square. Prior to their move, however, Zumbrum and company experienced a large amount of backlash from Broad Ripple, their last home.

Ever since their migration to Fountain Square, Zumbrum admits everything has been going very smoothly.

“Here in Fountain Square, everybody’s super supportive,” Zumbrum explains. “Everybody loves that we’re here. We haven’t heard anything from any of the neighbors and that’s been really great.”

Zumbrum has made an effort to reach out to other businesses in the community, even joining the Fountain Square Merchants Association.

Since becoming apart of the community, Johnson decided to build a guitar that would be kept at the Murphy Center for the Arts. According to Johnson, the guitar is for “anybody in the neighborhood that wants to do a concert or recording session.”

Reflecting on his time so far in the Square, Johnson has come to the realization that this truly is a special community of people.

“If you think about the reasons, first, Fountain Square is at the very heart an arts-based neighborhood with infrastructure, art centers, and organizations that encourage that kind of thing,” Johnson said. “It’s also affordable which is a really important link in the chain for musicians. I have to say I’ve never been apart of a community quite like this that seems so unified musically and personally, but also just geographically.”

MAINTAINING THE MOMENTUM

With another music venue on its way, according to Zumbrum, Fountain Square will undoubtedly continue to draw artists of all backgrounds to its sidewalks bursting from the seams with creativity.

With a continual stream of house shows, venue shows, and arts events, the community has undoubtedly still not reached its full potential.

“Those guys [Fountain Square bands], they move quickly to new projects and they all share the same equipment and they’re all in bands together, but the bands move at a rapid pace that keeps it interesting,” Rogers said.

“I do think they’ll all do something that eventually blows everybody’s mind.”

With several businesses moving to the area, Duncan is hopeful that Fountain Square will maintain its reputation as an arts-driven community.

“With the city changing and everything, everyone used to come here because it was cheap, and now it’s the new arts district. Hopefully it doesn’t go too far out of our reach,” he said.

THE BOOK OF FOLK

BY: SETH JOHNSON

Traveling across the country and back again, through deserts, mountains, and beaches, Benjamin London and his guitar have found a friend in street corners.

Known as busking, London performs in the streets of where ever he finds himself. Having recently returned from a busking stint at South by Southwest (SXSW), London uses his improvised folk tunes as a storytelling outlet.

“Folk music, to me, is for the people. It’s a history- telling stories and handing them down to ordinary people,” London said. “Learning folk songs and learning how to play that style helps me understand life better.”

Influenced by ‘60s folk garage rock, London believes improvising his way through songs allows him to “unlock” his subconscious, piecing his thoughts make a message.

“If I wanted to write down everything that I saw in a day, it would drive me crazy,” he said. “Basically what I have to do is let it all happen, and then instead of writing about it, say what I think about it in little phrases.”

To this point, London has released a single and two collections of songs as his solo project, all of which are available for download on his Bandcamp page. He is also affiliated with the projects Royalty and She Creatures of the Hollywood Hills.

London, who graduated from Ivy Tech in Muncie, considers himself apart of the Fountain Square music community in Indianapolis. Here he has made many music connections including one with Christian Taylor who has shared his wisdom with the younger London.

“I like to think of him as Yoda,” London said. “He’s been through it all. He’s really good at expressing himself through music.”

Taylor collaborates with a multitude of local musicians, including Derek Johnson, Assistant Professor of Music Theory and Composition at Ball State.

Johnson, who is often presented with opportunities to collaborate with renowned musicians around the world, admits that “for some reason” he enjoys playing with Christian Taylor most at this time in his life.

Johnson and Taylor have been performing songs from their upcoming cassette/digital download release, titled “Blues Tape.” Although Taylor wrote every song on the tape, Johnson has been involved with the recording process.

In one particular instance, Johnson describes a very unique recording experience he had with Taylor in his

personal JoHNsoNgs studio.

“On the final track on the album, ‘Crying Unto Thee,’ we had to improvise drums, as the kit I had on loan went away,” Johnson said. “On that track I recorded boot clicks and broom, and Christian plays a music stand and stomps. It turned out great, a really unique and interesting sound.”

The duo has been very satisfied with how the album is coming along. According to Johnson, “the songs are great,” but the approach the two have taken in the studio is what is really setting the music apart.

“Christian keeps saying, ‘this doesn’t sound like anything I’ve heard before,’” Johnson said.

Johnson very much enjoys working with Taylor, despite their contrast in musical backgrounds.

“Although we have very different experience and ways of working, Christian more from the rock and folk world, and me from the classical world, we work together really well,” Johnson said. “You could say we have very complimentary skill sets.”

PASSING ON THE TORCH

BY: SETH JOHNSON

Joel Tucker remembers purchasing his first jazz CD.

Perusing the shelves of Broad Ripple's Indy CD & Vinyl, the young Tucker eventually decided to dive into the jazz section. A freshman in high school at the time, Tucker concluded upon a CD by The Wes Montgomery Trio, without even knowing that Montgomery was a jazz guitarist from his own state.

Jazz slowly captivated Tucker. Around this same time, he had begun learning to play the guitar. Naturally, jazz began to seep from Tucker's pores onto the neck of his guitar.

"When I listened to this, it kind of opened my ears up to a whole new world- like, 'What the heck are they doing?'" Tucker said. "It sounded like nothing I'd ever heard before. The CD changed the way I heard things."

Tucker now performs jazz regularly with various Indiana musicians. He recently received a jazz studies degree with a focus on the guitar from Indiana University, and plans on continuing to make a mark on the Indiana jazz scene.

Fred Withrow is a jazz bassist in the state. Withrow was also baptized into the world of jazz in high school; however, he is apart of the older generation of jazz musicians in the state, having played since 1990.

Withrow refers to himself as a "freelance" jazz musicians, meaning he does not have a regular group that he performs with.

"Most jazz musicians now are freelancers," he said. "Jazz musicians know a set of tunes more or less that all other jazz musicians know. There's a lot of common ground there. You work with a lot of different people."

While their passion for jazz is obvious through their continued allegiance to the genre, both Tucker and Withrow expressed the common misunderstanding that most outside of the jazz community have of the music.

Tucker explained that many people in the greater Indianapolis community hold the opinion that jazz musicians are "standoffish," sticking exclusively to their style and marrying their ears to the genre. He is trying to change that common misconception with his own personal style.

"One thing I like to do when I play is incorporate a bunch of different styles into my playing to appeal to people who may be interested in the same type of music that I am," he said. "That's what I would like to see happen more to appeal to people- playing music that you like that's not jazz. A lot of people are afraid to do that because it strays away from the norm."

TWO JOINTS, ONE JIVE

Although Indianapolis only has two jazz clubs to offer, the contrasts between the two provide a plethora of music listening experiences.

The Jazz Kitchen is located about a mile outside of Broad Ripple, in an area owner David Allee refers to as Meridian Kessler.

The Jazz Kitchen caters to both jazz and dining, as its name portrays. The venue offers live jazz music five nights a week, with one other night dedicated to Latin music.

Allee explained that the genre of “jazz” is very vast, allowing for the venue to host all sorts of styles from Big Band to swing.

“What’s great about our format is we can do a lot of things under that jazz umbrella,” Allee said. “We keep it fresh all the time, which from a work standpoint is great for me.”

Drawing in several national acts, in addition to the local regulars, Allee explained that the venue’s draw expands far beyond its nearby community.

“They’re destination events. If I have a certain band, it doesn’t matter where they [visitors] live,” he said. “It’s not like having your neighborhood pub. It’s more like, ‘I like that artist. I’m going to go see them.’”

Withrow and Tucker both regularly play gigs at The Jazz Kitchen and the Chatterbox. For Tucker, The Jazz Kitchen is less comforting due to its elegant atmosphere.

“The Jazz Kitchen is definitely like, you sit down and you wear a nice outfit and spend a whole lot of money,” he said. “When we go, we [younger jazz fans] don’t do that. We sit down and listen to who’s playing. There’s no prerequisite to having to spend a lot of money but that’s just kind of the vibe.”

Withrow agrees with The Jazz Kitchen’s claim to being “Indiana’s premier jazz club.” Nevertheless, he also agrees it is more of a date spot than a younger crowd’s hang out.

“Generally at The Jazz Kitchen, it’s a nicer presentation. It’s a nice atmosphere. It seems pretty clean,” he said. “They have a very nice menu of really good food. It’s more like a dinner jazz club in a lot of ways.”

Withrow added that every table in The Jazz Kitchen has a placard, reading, ‘Please no talking during the performance.’” This being said, he believes both The Jazz Kitchen and the Chatterbox Jazz Club both serve their own purposes to the jazz scene as a whole.

The Chatterbox is where Tucker usually finds himself when he is both performing and attending concerts. Located on Mass. Ave., the Chatterbox is a dive bar with a very intimate setting.

"Anywhere you're sitting, you're going to be really close to the actual music that's coming out," he said. "When I'm playing on stage, if someone is walking into the door, they literally pass you and you're about a foot away from them. You can look them in the eye and say, 'Thank you for coming.'"

Ever since his first visit to the Chatterbox, Tucker said he has never had a negative experience thanks to "everybody who plays there and supports this jazz club."

Withrow points out that the Chatterbox's name also rings true to its atmosphere. Nevertheless, he is sure that the boisterous environment is a more common trend amongst modern jazz clubs around the country.

"It's noisy, hints the name the Chatterbox," he said. "Everybody's yakking while the band is playing, which I think lends itself to an atmosphere of a different kind. It's jam-packed."

Despite their differences, Withrow still appreciates both venues.

"The Jazz Kitchen is a little bit more of listening environment. I think that's nice, but each venue has its purpose," he said.

TORCHBEARERS

With an older generation of jazz musicians fading out of the scene, the health of Indiana's jazz community will fall onto the shoulders of younger musicians such as Tucker.

Tucker and fellow friends, such as Zach Lapidus (pianist) have been entering the jazz community, playing with fellow musicians young and old. According to Tucker, their talent has grabbed the attention of Withrow and his older cohorts.

"It's definitely enough [younger musicians] to make a staple- for people who have been doing this for a while to come out and be like, 'Who are these new guys? This is some young blood,' Tucker said.

Allee has seen the young jazz musicians bloom as they have learned from the wise, old jazz folk they find themselves surrounded by.

"We've got a lot of top notch, super quality musicians that are nationally recognized," he said. "I think there's an up-and-coming generation that's learning from them and putting their mark on the scene."

While Tucker and Withrow have played together before, Tucker explained that the younger musicians do typically play more often with their younger counterparts. Nevertheless, he does not see an extreme amount of exclusivity amongst the two generations of jazz players.

It's never a defined line because it's all just beautiful music that we're trying to make," Tucker said. "There's no competition. It's just two different schools of thought."

Withrow admits his generation's prominence is "on the downturn," however; he is confident in what Tucker and company have to offer.

According to Withrow, Tucker and his generation have made the most of easily accessible music through the Internet. To him, that contributes greatly to the "fresh energy" they are exuding.

Withrow hopes the jazz community continues to grow and develop, giving young talent a chance to work on their "chops" and "craft." He believes that if the young generation can hone in on all of their influences and successfully create genuine jazz, then the future of Indiana's jazz community will continue to shine bright.

"The world of music is at their fingertips and they bring that to jazz music," he said. "Jazz is kind of a melting pot for a lot of things. They're great. They're the torchbearers."

LETTING LOOSE

BY: SETH JOHNSON

In 1979, a 16-year-old Paul Mahern was recruited by what would later become the Zero Boys to be their menacing front man. After a house show at which Mahern's high school band was performing, the spiky-haired youngster was asked to join the rest of the band.

Little did he know, the Zero Boys would become a staple of Indiana punk music.

Mahern and company quickly began bonding over several raw punk records, appropriately leading them down the punk rock avenue as a band.

"The mentality was that we all grew up in the Midwest, listening to Midwest rock radio. We were really not into bands like Foreigner and Styx and things like that, but we were very much into bands like The Stooges, The Pistols and the Ramones," Mahern said. "We just felt like rock 'n' roll needed a reboot away from the progressive rock that was being played on the radio."

The band became regulars at Crazy Al's, a "new wave" bar located in downtown Indianapolis. The venue's progressive, liberating vibes were a great fit for the Zero Boys' punk rock edge.

Steve Cohen was the owner of Crazy Al's during its heyday. According to him, the Zero Boys were one of the more popular local acts to play the club.

"Zero Boys were huge. I think Paul was 16-years-old maybe," Cohen remembers.

Throughout the latter '70s Cohen promoted shows at local venues including The Vogue and Crazy Al's. After becoming more and more involved at Al's over time, Cohen was eventually forced to either let the bar close or inherit it from the original owner, Jeff Bugbee.

Having invested thousands of dollars in building the venue's stage, Cohen and Dave Myers, who had also been helping with developing the bar, decided to finish what they had started.

"Basically we decided to go into the bar business with absolutely no knowledge of how to run a bar or anything like that," Cohen said. "We knew how to book bands, but we didn't know how to run a bar."

And booking bands is just what they did. Crazy Al's hosted many local bands, but they also drew in some legendary rock acts as well, including The Go-Go's, Joan Jett, and X, an historic punk rock band from L.A.

Cohen specifically remembers the story behind X's visit to Al's, a show he referred to as the best punk rock show they ever hosted.

“Because it was Memorial Day weekend, and that was when the race [Indianapolis 500] was a big deal, the manager called me and said, ‘we have to cancel. I can’t find a hotel room,’” Cohen said. “So I ended up offering to let the band stay at my place, which they did. It was one of the most surreal experiences I will ever have.”

Al’s hosted several punk rock shows, although Cohen said the bar was never exclusively punk, like CBGB’s for example. Instead, he labeled it as “new wave.”

“We had a lot of bands that had a punk sensibility to them. I don’t think I’d ever call Crazy Al’s a punk rock club,” Cohen said. “At that time, I think we called it new wave. The new wave genre at that time had so many different aspects to it.”

At the end of the day, Al’s simply wanted to make a mark on Indiana’s underground music scene.

“We always tried to inspire the local music scene. We didn’t want to bore ‘em,” Cohen said.

THE MOVEMENT

John Terrill’s new wave band, The Dancing Cigarettes played to big crowds in Bloomington in the early to mid ‘80s.

Back in this era of underground music, the crowd was freer, letting the music captivate their collective step.

“The most ratifying thing was that people really danced and really got into it. It wasn’t so pretentious,” Terrill said. “We used to get a lot of crap that we were too arty from the punkers in town, but then they’d come to the shows and have a good time.”

When the Cigs first became popular, they would have to play three sets of music a night, as supporting acts were rarely booked. Despite this, Terrill remembers a vivacious crowd of diverse dancers moving deep into the night at their shows.

“By the third set, it would get pretty wild,” Terrill said. “It would literally get way out there- very psychedelic, but in a different way than the old ‘60s psychedelic.”

Terrill remembers touring, just as any other DIY band would, sleeping on people’s floors after each night’s gig. The band’s most notable show was an open mic appearance at CBGB’s.

Mahern remembers when the new wave crowd would also move to the music of the Zero Boys, despite the band’s punk rock edge.

“When we first started playing, it was basically to this new wave audience and they would dance,” he said. “It

was a really different atmosphere.”

The Zero Boys eventually moved on to play strictly punk rock shows. In fact, the band opened for the Beastie Boys’ original hardcore outfit, as well as for the Dead Kennedys and Minor Threat at a California gig.

Mahern specifically recollects renting out a building where people trained their dogs and transforming it into a sweaty punk palace.

“That was probably the first time Indianapolis saw a real hardcore show, where there was stage diving and it was all under 21,” Mahern said. “That was really the beginning of the all-ages, DIY movement in Indiana.”

But while hardcore punk was gaining fervor, the new wave crowd in Indiana still kept moving.

“We would have good crowds, but a good show was one where we’d have a lot of dancing and a lot of fans,” Cohen said. “It was just a club where everybody seemed to be having a good time.”

Dancing wasn’t the only way bands would entertain fans. Cohen specifically remembers a musician by the name of Randy Kane, who played in several bands during the days of Al’s. Kane’s bands at the time would often cover the Talking Heads’ “Psycho Killer.” During the song, Kane would make the most of his artificial leg, which usually was not noticeable according to Cohen.

“Depending on how he felt, he’d get a big ole freakin’ knife and he’d start stabbing himself in the leg,” Cohen said. “People would be appalled.”

Kane’s rebellious nature was also reflected in the fans that attended shows at Al’s. Cohen spoke to the fact that underage drinking was rampant at the club. And smuggling in booze was also quite regular.

“After every show when we’d clean up. We’d probably find 30 hard liquor bottles that people had brought into the club,” Cohen said.

To this day, however; Cohen and his Al’s gang are still quite close, having been through a very crucial movement in Indiana music history.

“That whole group of people that were involved with Al’s at that time are all still really good friends,” Cohen said. “It’s amazing how much one place could influence and cause people to have so many friendships and such a bond over 30-something years later. There are many of us who our spouses or longtime girlfriends all came from Al’s.”

THE EXPRESSION

If the music was the foundation, then the culture was what made up the rest of this monumental new wave

creation.

Down the street from a retro clothing shop, fashion was very important to most who attended shows at the club.

“With Al’s, not everybody got dressed up to go out, but all the cool people did,” Cohen said.

Fashion was very important to the regular crowd at Al’s, according to Cohen. From the ska kids to the new romantics, fashion became almost as important as the music at that club.

Even when it came to sexual preference, Al’s made sure it was welcoming to every single person that walked in its doors.

“We had all these colorful people that would come to our club,” Cohen said. “Everybody had their thing, their individuality. They wanted to be different. We encouraged people to be themselves, and there weren’t a whole lot of clubs that did that back in the day.”

Terrill remembers a similar sense of freedom in Bloomington, when the Dancing Cigarettes were playing their brand of new wave to the underground masses.

“Our scene was more like a real renaissance thing, where there was visual art mixed in with poetry and everything else. People were making movies. All kinds of stuff was going on,” he said. “It was a very free time for artistic expression.”

In addition to being musicians, many of the Dancing Cigarettes’ members were even visual artists, according to Terrill. And some of the members had no musical background at all. This contrast in artistic know-how led to the band’s experimental nature.

While Cohen admits “liberal is too conservative” for him, he never felt he had to preach to the choir of oddballs that attended his bar. Instead, he believes the bar’s atmosphere simply lent itself to an open, expressive environment.

“I would say it was a place where anybody could be themselves no matter how weird it was. It was self-expressionism,” he said. “There was a real artistic sense to it. You could be as weird as you wanted to be, and you could be as normal as you wanted to be. It was just the ability to be yourself with absolutely no one judging you.”

AUTHOR'S STATEMENT

Having spent hours upon hours talking with Indiana musicians via phone, email, and in-person, I can say that the passion of these Indiana musicians inspires me, not only as a writer but as a resident. As a music journalist, it's very easy to pursue the big time, to strive for a job at *Rolling Stone*. But honestly, I believe this micro-level music scene is just as true, if not truer, to its passion than the big wig, chart-topping stars. I was once very blind to what my local music scene had to offer, but now that I have become immersed in it, it's hard not to get excited on a daily basis about what is happening around me in this great state.

It was amazing to me how much time my sources spent talking with me, considering I specifically told them my project would not be widely distributed. Despite this fact, I was amazed with how responsive my sources were in talking with me, sometimes for great lengths of time. I specifically remember my conversation with Steve Cohen, long-time owner of the now deceased Crazy Al's. Cohen expanded upon several compelling memories he had over the course of the one-hour interview, looking back on memory after memory he had of the club and how much of an impact these memories had. He reflected, "That whole group of people that were involved with Al's at that time are all still really good friends. It was such a part of our lives. It's amazing how much one place could influence and cause people to have so many friendships and such a bond over 30-something years later." To be honest, I believe Al's is a great metaphor for Indiana's music scene. So many artists that I have interviewed expressed the lifelong relationships they have developed with people, all under the umbrella of Indiana music. Tim Felton, guitarist in Bloomington's husband & wife reflected on this unifying nature, saying, "I would say everyone in the band feels like they have a family that is beyond blood. A lot of us relocated to Bloomington. You don't see your blood relatives as often, but you see a lot of your friends and they've kind of become family members." These two examples illustrate that their love of music and community are intrinsically tied together and reflect a greater passion than just being music icons.

Several people helped make this project possible. First and foremost, there are all the artists, club owners, and music minds that I interviewed along the way. I am very thankful for the hospitality and genuineness that each interviewee gave me. Working on this project was so much fun for me, and a lot of that is linked to these great people, who treated me like their friend. Next, I would like to thank Rick Wilkerson, who was never quoted in any of these articles but helped in the project's initial stages, giving me ideas as to what stories I should pursue. Wilkerson is a huge advocator of the state himself and is writing a book about Indiana music. Travis Harvey of Village Green Records also helped me brainstorm ideas for this project, and to him I am very thankful. Lastly, my thesis advisor, Ryan Sparrow, has always pushed me to grow as a writer, and I am very thankful for his guidance in this process.